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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2009

In Today's Papers

MFA Press Briefing Touches on Relations with Armenia, Iran, and Syria

All media report Turkish Foreign Ministry Spokesman Burak Ozugergin told a press briefing Wednesday that Turkey and Armenia "were continuing their negotiations in various levels." Ozugergin noted, "We are discussing all issues with Armenia, and what is important are the principles we set in place." Ozugergin said that there was also an ongoing process between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and both processes were affecting each other. The spokesperson referred to recent remarks of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia that they had reached a compromise that progress was necessary and that the shuttle democracy should be maintained. Ozugergin said that Turkey was supporting a solution to the Upper Karabakh dispute through peaceful means, and a positive course of the process would contribute to the peace and stability in the Caucasus. The spokesman also said that Turkey would support any positive development or step in the Minsk process. "The Settlement of Upper Karabakh problem will restore stability in the region, and make it sustainable," Ozugergin said. Also, Ozugergin said that Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu might meet foreign ministers of other countries, including his Armenian counterpart Eduard Nalbandian, in the Greek island of Corfu during an informal meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) this weekend. Ozugergin said that Davutoglu would meet his Greek counterpart on the sidelines of the meeting. Regarding Iran, Ozugergin expressed Ankara's belief that Iran was capable of solving its problems. "Iran can keep the means to seek its rights, and is capable of solving its problems and discussions." Ozugergin underlined Iran's importance for the region, and said Turkey was closely monitoring developments in that country. "We hope this process will contribute to the improvement of democratic institutions and rules in Iran," Ozugergin said. Ozugergin said that Turkey believed Iran could satisfactorily end the political discussions within its territories. The spokesperson also said Turkey would respect any decision of Iran.

Regarding the Israeli-Syria relations Ozugergin said the Israeli-Syrian negotiations under mediation could resume upon the common will of the two countries, "Turkey has conveyed to the two parties that it is ready (for talks)." Ozugergin also said that

Turkey was in close cooperation with the U.S. administration, and had told the administration that it would go on mediating when necessary conditions occurred.

FM Davutoglu: "We Will not Pursue Any Policies Without Azerbaijan's Participation"

Mainstream Hurriyet reports that Davutoglu for the first time as the Foreign Minister, attended the Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee meeting and said that "Turkey will never pursue policies without taking Azerbaijan into consideration." Davutoglu added "Some circles show the closure of the Turkey-Armenia border as a problem, but the border gate was open until 1993. Our active roles in the Caucasus, Middle East, North Africa, and Center Asia will continue."

President Gul Travels to China Together With 90 Businessmen

Mainstreams Hurriyet and Sabah report that in an interview prior to his visit to China, President Gul said "China is a natural partner and Turkey wants to increase business with China. Turkey and China are in a good position to overcome new challenges and pursue greater prosperity through cooperation. The cooperation between Turkey and China is of importance not only to our two countries, but also to the international community." Sabah notes that the businessmen travelling with President Gul will sign business deals and projects worth \$2.9 billion.

In a related story, mainstream Vatan reports that while there are tensions between the PM and the DTP over scheduling an appointment for a meeting, the Presidential Palace made a gesture to DTP and added a representative from the party to the President's visit to

ANKARA 00000899 002 OF 003

China. The Deputy Chairman of DTP Selahattin Demirtas was on Gul's plane to represent the DTP during the presidential visit to China.

Military Prosecutor's Office: "The Anti-Government Plan was not Prepared at the TGS Headquarters"

All papers: The Turkish military ruled out Wednesday the prosecution of a senior navy officer Albay Dursun Gıgek suspected of allegedly drafting a plan to destroy the ruling AKP. The Military Prosecutor's Office said it has confirmed that the alleged document was not prepared in the General Staff headquarters. The case file was sent to Istanbul Public Prosecutor's Office. The Military Prosecutor also indicated that there was no need to investigate the navy colonel. The office sent the file to Istanbul Chief Prosecutor's Office.

Editorial Commentary on the Military Court Decision

Fikret Bila wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "The Military Prosecutor's decision invalidates claims of a coup plotting organization within the Turkish General Staff. At this point, it seems likely that the document in question is a fake. There will be a civilian judicial process as well, but at the same time, it is difficult not to believe this document was deliberately prepared in order to ruin the army's prestige."

Oktay Eksi wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "The military prosecutor did the right thing and reached its verdict based on evidence, instead of suspicion or speculation. There was no concrete proof that warranted a military investigation, therefore the case was forwarded to the hands of the civilian judicial authority. This is very normal."

Ali Bayramoglu wrote in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "The military court decision is an effort to close the case completely or at least put it on hold. The investigation started and concluded within the military ranks. Regardless of this decision, the political ramifications of this case will continue and will force the military to change."

Obama Gets Tough Against Iran (Haberturk, Ortadogu, CNN Turk)

Media draw attention to U.S. President Obama's toughened stance against Iran. Far right Ortadogu, mainstream Haberturk, and mainstream CNN Turk all carry the same headline, "Obama Gets Tough Against Iran." Leftist Taraf reports, "Following days of criticism from Republicans in the U.S.," Obama, "spoke out against the use of

violence against protestors in Tehran." Liberal Radikal notes, "Obama exploded at charges he was acting too softly toward Iran," as he emphasized, "What's important is whether the government is seen as legitimate in the eyes of the Iranian public, not in the eyes of the U.S." Meanwhile, NTV reports in "Crisis in Iran," that Ahmadinejad has said, "U.S. President Obama, don't interfere in our internal affairs."

"Another Blood Bath" in Iraq (Radikal, Yeni Safak)

Media note the bomb attack in Baghdad yesterday came during the days prior to the beginning of the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. Haberturk headlines, "As U.S. Soldiers Withdraw, Baghdad Gets Rough." Mainstream Hurriyet reports "Baghdad Is Rocked By A Bomb," and the paper notes, "U.S. troops will begin their withdrawal from Iraq in a few days," and yet, "the bomb attacks are increasing." Liberal Radikal and Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak call the attack "Another Iraqi Blood Bath." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet calls the attack, "One of the bloodiest attacks in the Shiite neighborhoods of Baghdad," and "the bomb set off fires throughout the marketplace." The paper also reports, "The government of Iraq has declared June 30th a holiday," as "U.S. troops begin the process of their withdrawal on that day."

Drone Attack on Taliban Funeral Kills 70 (CNN Turk)

Most media report the U.S. drone attack targeted and killed 70 Taliban in Pakistan, while the Islamist media either didn't report on the story or when they did, omitted the part about the dead being

ANKARA 00000899 003 OF 003

Taliban militants. Far right Ortadogu reports "America Kills 70 Taliban with A 'Heron.'" Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet calls the strike, "An Attack on The Heart of The Taliban." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak ignores reports Taliban were the target of the strike and headlines, "The U.S. Hits Another Funeral: 70 Dead," and the paper reports, "A U.S. spy plane attacked Pakistan's South Waziristan region and killed 70 people." In addition, the paper points out, "Last year the U.S. has launched 43 air attacks in the region" and "killed 400 people." Islamist-oriented Zaman did not report on the strike at all in its paper or on its website.

U.S. Decides to Send Ambassador to Damascus

Media are positive about the announcement the U.S. will appoint a new ambassador to Damascus. Mainstream Haberturk reports in, "An Ambassador from the U.S. to Syria," that "after a four-year break, the U.S. will send an Ambassador to Syria," and "The U.S. withdrew its Ambassador in Damascus following the assassination of Lebanese PM Rafik Hariri." Far right Ortadogu reports, "The appointment is part of Obama's goal of improving relations with the Middle East and a sign of Syria's growing role in the region." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "It's still not known who will be appointed as ambassador." Liberal Radikal reports, "Turkey is pleased," about the appointment as MFA Spokesperson Burak Ozurgergin "welcomed the decision of the United States to appoint an ambassador to the Syrian capital of Damascus, and expressed pleasure with further improvement of relations between Syria and the United States." Mainstream Sabah comments, "Relations came to a halt after the U.S. said Syria of supported terror and played a role in (Lebanese PM) Hariri's assassination, relations are back on track with the appointment of a new ambassador."

U.S. Armenian Diaspora Pleased with New Appointment of Israeli Ambassador to the U.S.

Mainstream Hurriyet reports "The new Israeli Ambassador to the U.S., Michale B. Oren, refers to the events of 1915 as 'genocide,'" and the paper adds, "the Armenian Diaspora in the U.S. is pleased," with the appointment.

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- After waiting two months for a response to a request for a meeting with PM Erdogan, the largely pro-Kurdish opposition party DTP decided to withdraw its request.

- Today PM Erdogan will travel to Albania and Brussels.
- The Parliament approves a bill for the restructuring of credit card debts.

World

- British Foreign Secretary Milliband cancels his trip to Cyprus as the Greek Cypriots voice objections to Milliband's plans to visit TRNC President Talat in his office.
- While Iran continues to boil, President Abdullah Gul stresses that stability in Iran is very important for Turkey.
- A bomb exploded in a market in Sadr city of Baghdad killing 72 people injuring 150 others.

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